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Limiting Legal Remedies for Medicaid Prioritizes Politics over Access to Care

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In the first U.S. Supreme Court case involving access to abortion after the 2024 election, a 6-3 majority allowed states to block Medicaid patients from choosing their own health care provider. *Medina v. Planned Parenthood South Atlantic* involved a diabetic Medicaid patient seeking comprehensive health care at Planned Parenthood South Atlantic (PPSA). In 2018, South Carolina blocked PPSA from Medicaid unless it would agree not to provide any abortions. Under federal law, Medicaid already only pays for abortions in cases of rape, incest, or to save the life or health of the patient. But that wasn't enough for South Carolina policymakers, who in 2022 also voted to severely *restrict* abortion access.

Medina shows that states are emboldened to limit access to medical care after the *Dobbs* decision overturned the right to access abortion. At the same time, this decision allows states to defy safeguards for people enrolled in federal spending programs, like Medicaid, reflecting a long campaign to *weaken* the American safety net. Together, the implications for access to medical care across different states cannot be overstated.